

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
FOI/PA  
DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET  
FOI/PA# 1346532-0

Total Deleted Page(s) = 77

Page 6 ~ Duplicate;  
Page 7 ~ Duplicate;  
Page 19 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 20 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D; b7E;  
Page 21 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 22 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D; b7E;  
Page 23 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 24 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 25 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 26 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 27 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 28 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 29 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 30 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 31 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 32 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 33 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 34 ~ b3;  
Page 35 ~ b3;  
Page 36 ~ b3;  
Page 40 ~ b3;  
Page 41 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 42 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 43 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 44 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 45 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 46 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 47 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 48 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 49 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 50 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 51 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 52 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 53 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 54 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 55 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 56 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 57 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 58 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 59 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 60 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 61 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 62 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 63 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 64 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 65 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 66 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 67 ~ b3; b6; b7C;

# Trump Plaza fined \$450,000 for

## Casino used \$1 to 'thank' note

By PATRICK JENKINS

The Casino Control Commission yesterday fined Trump Plaza \$450,000 for giving a high roller nearly \$1.6 million in prohibited cash complementaries disguised as gifts of luxury cars.

Although Trump Plaza claimed the cars it gave notorious high roller Robert Libutti were gifts, the commission ruled otherwise, contending the practice was nothing more than a scam to get around the ban on cash complementaries.

"Trump Plaza's position is an insult to anyone's intelligence," said an outraged commission Chairman Steven Perskie. "The cars were an artifice utilized as an evasion against the prohibition against cash complementaries."

The commission ruled that the ostensible gifts of luxury cars, including Mercedes-Benzes, Ferraris, Testarossas and Rolls-Royces, to Libutti was simply a ploy to get around the ban on cash complementaries because Libutti never took the cars. Instead, he took checks from the auto dealers and cashed them at Trump Plaza.

The case against Trump Plaza was argued yesterday by Deputy Attorney General Wendy Way of the Division of Gaming Enforcement (DGE), who said that between January 1988 and August 1989, the casino gave Libutti nine cars and one accessory package.

The total value, according to Commissioner Frank Dodd, was \$1.6 million.

During that time, Libutti lost \$4.34 million at Trump Plaza, Perskie noted.

In its decision, the commission determined that only one gift of a luxury car, a \$60,000 Mercedes-Benz given to Libutti's daughter Edith, didn't violate the law because she kept it for several days before turning it over to a wholesaler who sold it in Massachusetts.

*Trump Plaza's position is an insult to anyone's intelligence. The cars were an artifice utilized as an evasion against the prohibition against cash complementaries.*

— Steven Perskie,  
top regulator

Clive Cummis, representing Bally's Grand, said the casino recognized the violation and acted immediately. He argued also that McCabe's action was not a violation of the rules of the game but a table inventory rule violation.

Deputy Attorney General Nancy Scharf said McCabe made the decision on his own but was not involved in falsifying the document. McCabe recognized his error and was remorseful, she added.

Joseph Fusco, representing

McCabe, asked that any suspension given to McCabe be credited against the suspension he served.

Commissioners James Hurley and Frank Dodd agreed with Perskie that Bally's Grand should be fined \$100,000 for the incident, plus \$10,000 for failing

On the other occasions, Libutti simply went to the dealerships where the cars Trump Plaza supposedly bought for him were and took a check for their value which he cashed at Trump Plaza.

In her arguments, Way contended the ploy was so transparent that at least two of the cars Trump Plaza allegedly bought for Libutti had been sold weeks beforehand and "weren't even on the lot."

One dealer, she said, informed Trump Plaza that Libutti wasn't interested in cars, but in cash, but the casino continued the practice of buying him cars.

Trump Plaza was represented by Brian Spector, who argued that the DGE failed to prove its case that the practice violated the ban on cash complementaries.

The Legislature has since removed the ban on cash complementaries, but the commission has yet to promulgate regulations on how they can be granted and under what conditions.

Libutti, a horse trainer from Seaucus, was described in court papers by a former Trump Plaza executive as "the highest player that Trump Plaza has hosted as far as level of play over the longest period of time."

Between May 1986 and November 1989, Libutti lost \$11.4 million at the Trump Plaza.

Libutti has also been the focal point of a variety of complaints against Trump Plaza and other casinos, which were found by the commission to have violated state equal employment opportunity regulations by replacing women and minority dealers at gaming tables where he played in deference to his perceived preference for white males.

At one point, the commission speculated on excluding Libutti from casinos because of his sexist and racist slurs and violent outbursts at the gaming tables, but backed off when the constitutionality of such action was privately questioned.

The commission also fined Bally's Grand \$110,000 for a July 1989 incident in which a shift manager placated a high roller incensed over not being allowed to place a bet by giving him \$10,000 in chips from a roulette table.

According to arguments yesterday, a player tried to place a bet beyond the table limit, but was told he couldn't and removed his bet from the number.

That number came up, and the outraged player demanded to be paid.

The shift manager, Robert McCabe, paid off the bet as if it had been legally placed, taking the chips from the roulette table's inventory.

A win document was falsified by an unidentified person shortly after.

The next day, Bally's Grand suspended McCabe without pay for 10 days.

29B-9961-49

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
NOV 22 1991	
FBI - NEWARK	





U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Newark, New Jersey  
July 13, 1987

TED KRUCKEL, JR., PRESIDENT,  
URBAN NATIONAL BANK,  
FRANKLIN LAKES, NEW JERSEY;  
BANK FRAUD AND EMBEZZLEMENT

[redacted] New York Field Office, Controller of the Currency, advised that in the normal course of examination at captioned bank, it was determined that a series of loans exceeded the legal maximum to any one customer. Research determined that the Bank President, TED KRUCKEL, had approved these loans, there was inadequate documentation in the loan files and there appeared to be inadequate or low collateral for the loans. It was also determined that one of the customers had been paying on several of the loans that were in other people's names. Of the total of the loans that are questionable, exceeds \$7 million. [redacted] said that approximately \$5 million will be written off a loss and collection on the remaining \$2 million is questionable. The loans were issued to TED KRUCKEL, ROBERT LI BUTTI, [redacted]

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[redacted] It is not yet been determined the degree of criminal involvement, if any, of LI BUTTI, [redacted]  
[redacted]

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4-Bureau  
1-AUSA, Newark  
2-Newark  
GJI/sab  
(7)out



Bicentennial of the United States Constitution (1787-1987)

29A-9961-9

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED

JUL 22 1987

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29B-9961-13

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
APR 30 1990	
FBI - [illegible]	

*[Handwritten signature/initials over the stamp]*

## memorandum

DATE:

4/26/90

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF:

SA [REDACTED]

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b7C

SUBJECT:

TED KAWCKEL, JR., PRESIDENT  
URBAN NATIONAL BANK  
FRANKLIN LAKES, NEW JERSEY  
BF&E  
OO: NEWARK

TO: ACTING SAE, NEWARK (29B - 9961) (P)

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ON 3/26/90 AUSA [REDACTED] ADVISED THAT (X)

[REDACTED]

BASED UPON THIS DEVELOPMENT, AUSA [REDACTED]

RECOMMENDED [REDACTED]

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ON 4/13/90 SA [REDACTED] CONTACTED [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] AND WAS ADVISED OF THE STATUS  
OF THE FBI INVESTIGATION OF CAPTIONED MATTER.

2 - NEWARK

HE WAS ALSO ADVISED OF THE COMMITMENT BY  
BOTH SA [ ] & AUSA [ ] TO

b6  
b7C

SEVERAL CASES WHICH THEY ARE ASSIGNED & ARE IN  
A TRIAL PREPARATION STAGE (29-10162).

IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THE U.S. ATTORNEY'S  
OFFICE, FBI [ ] WILL MEET AFTER MENTIONED  
TRIAL IS COMPLETED & DISCUSS THE INVESTIGATION / PROSECUTION  
OF CAPTIONED SUBJECT.

b7E

## memorandum

DATE:  
REPLY TO  
ATTN:  
SUBJECT:

8/14/90

SA [REDACTED]

b6  
b7C

TED KENCHEL, JR. PRESIDENT

URBAN NATIONAL BANK  
FRANKLIN LAKES, N.J.  
BFTB

OO: NEWARK

TO: ACTING SAC, NEWARK (29B - 9961) (P)

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b7E

ON 7/13/90 + 8/10/90 MEETINGS WERE

CONDUCTED BETWEEN AUSA'S [REDACTED]

AUSA [REDACTED]

+ SA [REDACTED]

ON 8/15/90 A

SUBPOENA WAS SERVED [REDACTED]

29B-9961-14

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
AUG 27 1990	
FBI - NEWARK	
FORM NO. 10 (REV. 10-80) GSA FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6	

U.S. GPO 1986-491-248/20641



12/6/90

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

THE STAR-LEDGER, Thursday, December 6, 1990

33

# Regulators put off their decision on bias complaints against Trump Plaza

By PATRICK JENKINS

The Casino Control Commission yesterday deferred decision on allegations that Trump Plaza discriminated against women and minority dealers in deference to the perceived desires of a high roller.

In a complaint filed by the state Division of Gaming Enforcement (DGE), Trump Plaza is accused of replacing women and minority dealers at a craps table with white male dealers to cater to the perceived demands of Robert Libutti of Saddle River, a high roller whose average bet was \$10,000.

Deputy Attorney General Fredric Gushin said women and minority dealers were removed from Libutti's table when he gambled from May 1986 until May 1989, when the practice of replacing them with white male dealers stopped following the citation of Caesars Atlantic City for the same violation.

During that time, Gushin said, Libutti gambled on 321 occasions and lost millions to Trump Plaza.

"There is clear evidence that Libutti used racial and sexual slurs to refer to women and blacks. He used the most ugly and derogatory slurs," said Gushin.

The DGE contended that Libutti's racial and sexual bigotry had an impact on the management at Trump Plaza.

"Management came to perceive Libutti's preferences and reassigned employees accordingly," Gushin said.

He said pit bosses acted in accordance with an unwritten directive that they replace blacks and women with white males at Libutti's table when he played.

"The decision was based solely on race and gender," Gushin said.

He discounted Trump Plaza contentions that the dealers were replaced with more experienced or able dealers.

Gushin said there were from 59 to 65 illegal moves of dealers in the case

and suggested a penalty of \$10,000 to \$15,000 for each violation.

Brian Spector, representing Trump Plaza, said each of the moves was made for a legitimate business reason and that the DGE allegations were too vague to rebut.

"We don't have one date as to when these individuals were replaced or one person who replaced them. That doesn't give Trump Plaza the chance to compare them," Spector said.

Spector said Trump Plaza didn't

## Casino accused of shifting dealers in deference to a high roller

dispute what Libutti said to employees, but said it wasn't limited just to women or minorities.

"His volatile temper was indiscriminate and directed at everyone, including family members and friends who were at the table with him. It ap-

plied to all races and both genders," Spector said.

Spector said the belief that Libutti didn't want women or minorities at his table developed in the employee break lounge as workers shared tales of the high roller's outbursts.

Casino Control Commission Chairman Steven Perskie said the commission would render its decision after discussing it in closed session.

In the Caesars discrimination case, the casino was fined \$250,000 for the violations.

In other business, the commission suspended the casino key employee license of Anthony Torcasio, a former vice president of the stalled Penthouse casino project in Atlantic City.

Torcasio was indicted in Septem-

ber by a federal grand jury, which charged him with aiding, abetting and causing extortion in connection with an alleged bribe to a West Virginia state senator in an effort to get casino gambling legalized there.

Torcasio has not worked in Atlantic City for five years.

The state's case was presented yesterday by Deputy Attorney General Joanne Ciancimino.

Torcasio's attorney, Joseph Fusco, declined comment following the hearing.

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GR

29A-9961-17

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
DEC 6 1990	
FBI - NEWARK	

293-9961-18

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
JAN 25 1991	
FBI — NEWARK	

*[Handwritten signature]*

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date of transcription 12/26/90

On December 20, 1990, in compliance to a Federal Grand  
Jury subpoena, [REDACTED]

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Investigation on 12/20/90 at [REDACTED] File # Newark 29B-9961

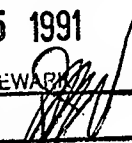
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by SA [REDACTED] caj Date dictated 12/21/90

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29B-9961-20

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SERIALIZED <i>h</i>	FILED <i>h</i>
JAN 25 1991	
FBI - NEWARK	



FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date of transcription 12/26/90

On November 29, 1990, in compliance to a Federal Grand  
Jury Subpoena, [REDACTED]

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Investigation on 11/29/90 at [REDACTED] Newark  
file # 29B-9961

by SA [REDACTED] caj Date dictated 12/3/90

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THE STAR-LEDGER, Thursday, February 21, 1991

# Casino watchdogs want 'rude' gambler banned for his links to Gotti

By PATRICK JENKINS

A high roller notorious for his racist and sexist slurs against casino personnel and patrons is also an associate of reputed mob boss John Gotti, according to the state Division of Gaming Enforcement (DGE), which wants him banned from the gaming halls.

Robert Libutti of Secaucus, already under scrutiny by gaming authorities for his behavior toward minority and female casino employees, should be barred from the casinos because of his association with Gotti, Attorney General Robert J. Del Tufo said yesterday in announcing the DGE action.

DGE Director John Sweeney said Gotti has been identified as the head of the Gambino crime family of New York and was a career offender. He added that the Casino Control Act has a provision to exclude associates of career offenders and others "inimical to the interests of the State of New Jersey."

In its petition, filed yesterday with the Casino Control Commission, the DGE said Libutti played at four Atlantic City casinos between September 1984, and October 1990, gambling \$20 million and losing \$12 million, and was given in excess of \$3.5 million in complimentary services.

Last July, the DGE said, two people associated with the Gambino crime family spoke with an undercover detective and said they were friendly with Libutti and singer Jimmy Roselli.

The two also said Libutti bragged of being "in (Donald) Trump's pockets," or having negotiated a lucrative contract for Roselli at the Trump Plaza casino, the DGE petition states.

On Aug. 10, according to the petition, Libutti met with Edward M. Tracy, then president and chief executive officer of the Trump Atlantic City Properties, purportedly to negotiate an exclusive contract for Roselli to perform at the Trump properties—Castle, Plaza and Taj Mahal.

Tracy, however, rejected Libutti's offer because Libutti wanted \$250,000 for himself, above and beyond Roselli's contract.

Angered, Libutti told Tracy he could cause "problems" for the Trump Organization and at least four times injected Gotti's name into the negotiations, according to the DGE.

Libutti met again with Tracy in September and indicated that he and others had "sat in front of John Gotti," who offered to assist Roselli in a

dispute with Frank Sinatra, the DGE said.

According to the DGE, Libutti said Gotti wanted him to find out if he could play at the Trump casinos and claimed Trump could make a lot of money from Gotti and other organized crime figures from around the country.

In its petition, the DGE also recited the complaints filed earlier against Libutti for his abusive treatment of minority and female casino employees.

In February 1989, the DGE filed a

## Officials say high roller threatened to put the squeeze on Trump exec

two-count complaint against Trump Plaza, alleging that the casino discriminated against female and minority employees in deference to Libutti's perceived preferences.

Libutti repeatedly abused minority and women dealers and box people, and

demanding they be removed from his craps game. He also abused other patrons, to the extent that casino officials reserved a table exclusively for him whenever he played.

The Trump Plaza case is still pending before the Casino Control Com-

mission.

Last November, the commission ruled in a similar case filed earlier against Caesars Atlantic City, fining the casino \$250,000 and ordering it to develop a training course for all employees that focused on compliance with statutory affirmative action and equal opportunity requirements, and with appropriate methods of dealing with high rollers.

Caesars replaced minority and women dealers with white males when Libutti played.

In testimony before the Casino Control Commission, officials of Trump Plaza said they stopped replacing minorities and women with white males at Libutti's table after the DGE filed its complaint against Caesars in 1988. Any replacement after that was "like for like, but the best dealer available," the officials said.

The DGE is asking that the commission permanently bar Libutti from all resort casinos because of his association with Gotti.

293 - 9961 - 21

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
FEB 27 1991	
FBI - NEWARK	

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(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

THE STAR-LEDGER, Thursday, March 14, 1991

23

# Regulators bar 'friend' of Gotti from casinos

By PATRICK JENKINS

The Casino Control Commission yesterday temporarily excluded Robert Libutti of Secaucus, a self-proclaimed associate of indicted New York mob boss John Gotti, from Atlantic City's casinos.

The commission, with Chairman Steven P. Perskie echoing former Gov. Brendan Byrne's warning to organized crime to keep its "dirty hands" out of Atlantic City, voted unanimously in favor of a state Division of Gaming Enforcement (DGE) request for preliminary exclusion pending a full hearing at a later, unspecified date.

Libutti, who gained notoriety over the last few years for his foul mouth, crude behavior, and sexist and racist slurs while gambling, didn't attend yesterday's hearing in Atlantic City and was not represented by an attorney.

Although the commission had asked the DGE to research the possibility of excluding Libutti because of his behavior, it was his proclamation that he was associated with Gotti that the division stressed in yesterday's hearing.

Saying it was a "straightforward case," Deputy Attorney General Mitchell Schwefel, representing the DGE, told the commissioners that all he had to do yesterday was show there was a reasonable possibility that Libutti would be permanently barred following a full hearing.

Basically, he said, there were two separate and independent grounds on which Libutti could be excluded.

The first was his association with a career criminal, which made his presence in the casinos inimical to the interest of the state, Schwefel said.

The second was his reported attempt to use his affiliation with organized crime to intimidate a casino, as well as his "contemptible" behavior

while gambling at Trump Plaza, which made him a person whose presence in a casino was also inimical to the interest of the state, Schwefel said.

Libutti, a high roller who gambled \$20 million in Atlantic City casinos between September 1984 and October 1990, losing \$12 million, claimed during negotiations with Trump officials over a singer's contract that he was associated with Gotti.

Subsequent and similar claims by Libutti were tape recorded by Edward Tracy, then chief executive officer of all Trump properties in Atlantic City, who alerted the State Police following the first conversation, Schwefel said.

Gotti, Schwefel told the commission, was the reputed head of the New York Gambino crime family and one of the most notorious organized crime figures in America.

Had it not been for Tracy's courage in alerting and cooperating with the authorities, Libutti could at this time be denying he had ever made the comments, Schwefel said.

"Now all he can do is claim he was name-dropping," he said.

Additionally, Schwefel said, undercover agents said known Gotti associates spoke of knowing Libutti.

"You can take Libutti's claim of association with Gotti at face value," Schwefel told the commissioners.

Even if he were to establish at a full hearing that he wasn't an associate of Gotti, Schwefel said, Libutti should still be banned from the casinos because of his use of Gotti's name in an attempt to intimidate a casino.

A DGE case against Trump Plaza for allegedly replacing female and minority dealers at Libutti's craps table with white males in deference to his perceived wishes remains pending.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

Date:  
Edition:

3/14/91

Title:

TED KNEWELL

Character:

or

Classification:

Submitting Office:

Indexing:

29B-9961-22

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MAR 14 1991	
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29B-9961-23

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SERIALIZED	FILED
MAR 14 1991	
FBI — NEWARK	
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## memorandum

DATE:

3/14/91

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF:

SA [REDACTED]

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b7C

SUBJECT:

TED KAWCKEL, JR. PRESIDENT  
URBAN NATIONAL BANK  
FRANKLIN LAKES, N.J.  
BFHE  
OO: NEWARK

TO: SAC, NEWARK (29B-9961) (P)

UPDATE

ON 11/29/90, 12/14/90 & 12/20/90, PURSUANT TO U.S. b3  
b6  
b7C

DISTRICT COURT SUBPOENAS, S.A. [REDACTED]

SA [REDACTED]

IS

CONTINUING TO EXAMINE & EVALUATE [REDACTED]

(2)

ON 2/15/91 IT WAS DETERMINED THAT  
NEW JERSEY S.C.I. INVESTIGATION [REDACTED]  
HAS INFORMATION REGARDING LIBUTTI & HIS RELATIONSHIP TO [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] THIS INFORMATION STEMMED FROM [REDACTED]  
B.C.U.A. INVESTIGATION & WHEN [REDACTED] NAME CAME UP  
IT WAS DETERMINED [REDACTED] WAS LIBUTTI'S [REDACTED] CONTINUED  
ATTEMPTS TO ARRANGE A MEETING WITH [REDACTED]  
SINCE 2/15/91 HAVE BEEN NEGATIVE.

ON 2/21/91 & 3/14/91 TWO NEWSPAPER ARTICLES  
REFER TO LIBUTTI & EXPLAIN THE CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION  
TEMPORARILY EXCLUDE LIBUTTI FROM ATLANTIC CITY CASINOS.  
THE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST LIBUTTI INCLUDE HIS TAPE RECORDED  
CONVERSATIONS WHICH STATE LIBUTTI USED JOHN GOTTI'S  
NAME IN AN ATTEMPT TO INTIMIDATE ATLANTIC CITY  
CASINOS INTO NEGOTIATING AN EXCLUSIVE CONTRACT FOR  
SINGER [REDACTED] WHEN THE CASINO REJECTED THE  
LIBUTTI'S OFFER HE TOLD THE [REDACTED] OR  
TRUMP ATLANTIC CITY PROPERTIES THAT HE (LIBUTTI)  
COULD CAUSE "PROBLEMS" FOR THE TRUMP ORGANIZATION &  
AT LEAST 4 TIMES INJECTED GOTTI'S NAME INTO THE  
NEGOTIATIONS.

### LEADS

NEWARK DIVISION AT WEST PATERSON, N.J.

- 1) WILL CONTINUE REVIEW OF [REDACTED]
- 2) WILL INTERVIEW NJ S.C.I. [REDACTED]
- 3) WILL INTERVIEW THE DIVISION OF GAMING ENFORCEMENT REGARDING  
LIBUTTI & HIS EXCLUSION FROM CASINOS

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b6  
b7C

b3  
b6  
b7C

# Memorandum



To : SAC, NEWARK (29B-9961) (P)

Date 6/24/91

From : SA [REDACTED] (GMRA)

b6  
b7C

Subject: TED KRUCKEL, JR.,  
PRESIDENT,  
URBAN NATIONAL BANK OF  
FRANKLIN LAKES, NEW JERSEY;  
BF&E;  
OO: NEWARK

## UPDATE

On 4/19/91, and 5/3/91, SA [REDACTED] met with Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) [REDACTED] Newark, NJ, to discuss captioned matter and to review various bank records. SA [REDACTED] traced \$5 million in loans to ROBERT LIBUTTI and [REDACTED] each received \$1.25 million and eventually the loan proceeds were passed on to LIBUTTI. LIBUTTI received a \$1.25 million loan which was the result of an overdraft at URBAN NATIONAL due to a check kite. Additionally, [REDACTED] and ROBERT LIBUTTI received another \$1.5 million which eventually flowed back to ROBERT LIBUTTI or were used to pay off other loans.

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b7C

During meetings with AUSA [REDACTED] it was agreed that SA [REDACTED]

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1-Newark  
GJI/eo  
(2)

29B-9961- 25

SEARCHED	INDEXED
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JUN 27 1991	
[REDACTED]	

29B-9961

On 6/7/91, a meeting was conducted (at request of )

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# Memorandum



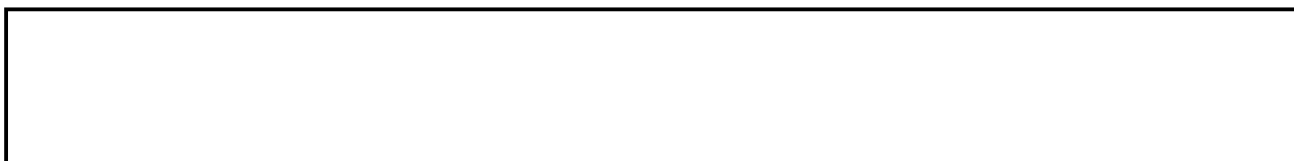
To : SAC, NEWARK (29B-9961)

Date 8/13/91

From : SA

b6  
b7C

Subject: TED KRUCKEL, JR.,  
PRESIDENT,  
URBAN NATIONAL BANK OF  
FRANKLIN LAKES, NEW JERSEY  
BF&E  
OO: NEWARK



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29B-9961-31

SEARCHED	INDEXED
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Submitting Office:

29B-5967

Indexing:

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 1991

NJ/NY

THE RECORD A-11

# Secaucus man permanently barred from casinos

The Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY — A Secaucus man who allegedly directed crude insults at casino workers and is charged with having ties to reputed mob boss John Gotti was permanently banned Wednesday from entering New Jersey casinos.

Robert LiButti, a 59-year-old thoroughbred horse consultant who lost \$12 million in the casinos over a six-year period, was placed on the industry's exclusion list by a 4-0 vote of the Casino Control Commission.

He had been temporarily banned from entering casinos in March, after the CCC placed him on the state's preliminary exclusion list at the request of the state Division of Gaming Enforcement. Following that action, LiButti was

entitled to challenge the division's effort to have him banned permanently, but he said he could not afford to.

In a recent interview, LiButti also said he was no longer interested in Atlantic City or gambling. "I feel like a guy who had cancer but is now in remission. Gambling in Atlantic City wrecked my life," LiButti said.

He acknowledged boasting to a Trump Plaza executive that he knew Gotti. But he insisted it was a false statement made only because Donald Trump owed him \$500,000 for a racehorse LiButti had sold him.

Commission Chairman Steve Perskie said LiButti's failure to request a hearing is an admission of guilt under state law.

Initially, Perskie had asked the Division of Gaming Enforcement to ban LiButti based only on his alleged racial and sexist harangues against workers in the craps pits. But the DGE felt that the case to ban LiButti was not strong enough

at the time and refused to propose it.

Such a move would have set a precedent, because the exclusion list has been reserved traditionally for casino cheats, criminals, or or-

ganized crime associates.

Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino and Caesars Hotel and Casino both were fined heavily for moving dealers in response to the perceived whims of LiButti, who, during losing streaks, went into dice-

and chips-throwing tirades that included slurs against blacks, females, and Jews.

Record Staff Writer Jim Consoli contributed to this article.

NK29B-5967-32

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FBI — NEWARK	

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23

# Regulators bar 'friend' of Gotti from casinos

By PATRICK JENKINS

The Casino Control Commission yesterday temporarily excluded Robert Libutti of Secaucus, a self-proclaimed associate of indicted New York mob boss John Gotti, from Atlantic City's casinos.

The commission, with Chairman Steven P. Perskie echoing former Gov. Brendan Byrne's warning to organized crime to keep its "dirty hands" out of Atlantic City, voted unanimously in favor of a state Division of Gaming Enforcement (DGE) request for preliminary exclusion pending a full hearing at a later, unspecified date.

Libutti, who gained notoriety over the last few years for his foul mouth, crude behavior, and sexist and racist slurs while gambling, didn't attend yesterday's hearing in Atlantic City and was not represented by an attorney.

Although the commission had asked the DGE to research the possibility of excluding Libutti because of his behavior, it was his proclamation that he was associated with Gotti that the division stressed in yesterday's hearing.

Saying it was a "straightforward case," Deputy Attorney General Mitchell Schwefel, representing the DGE, told the commissioners that all he had to do yesterday was show there was a reasonable possibility that Libutti would be permanently barred following a full hearing.

Basically, he said, there were two separate and independent grounds on which Libutti could be excluded:

The first was his association with a career criminal, which made his presence in the casinos inimical to the interest of the state, Schwefel said.

The second was his reported attempt to use his affiliation with organized crime to intimidate a casino, as well as his "contemptible" behavior

while gambling at Trump Plaza, which made him a person whose presence in a casino was also inimical to the interest of the state, Schwefel said.

Libutti, a high roller who gambled \$20 million in Atlantic City casinos between September 1984 and October 1990, losing \$12 million, claimed during negotiations with Trump officials over a singer's contract that he was associated with Gotti.

Subsequent and similar claims by Libutti were tape recorded by Edward Tracy, then chief executive officer of all Trump properties in Atlantic City, who alerted the State Police following the first conversation, Schwefel said.

Gotti, Schwefel told the commission, was the reputed head of the New York Gambino crime family and one of the most notorious organized crime figures in America.

Had it not been for Tracy's courage in alerting and cooperating with the authorities, Libutti could at this time be denying he had ever made the comments, Schwefel said.

"Now all he can do is claim he was name-dropping," he said.

Additionally, Schwefel said, undercover agents said known Gotti associates spoke of knowing Libutti.

"You can take Libutti's claim of association with Gotti at face value," Schwefel told the commissioners.

Even if he were to establish at a full hearing that he wasn't an associate of Gotti, Schwefel said, Libutti should still be banned from the casinos because of his use of Gotti's name in an attempt to intimidate a casino.

A DGE case against Trump Plaza for allegedly replacing female and minority dealers at Libutti's craps table with white males in deference to his perceived wishes remains pending.

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Classification:  
Submitting Office:

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THE STAR-LEDGER, Thursday, February 21, 1991

## Casino watchdogs want 'rude' gambler banned for his links to Gotti

By PATRICK JENKINS

A high roller notorious for his racist and sexist slurs against casino personnel and patrons is also an associate of reputed mob boss John Gotti, according to the state Division of Gaming Enforcement (DGE), which wants him banned from the gaming halls.

Robert Libutti, of Secaucus, already under scrutiny by gaming authorities for his behavior toward minority and female casino employees, should be barred from the casinos because of his association with Gotti, Attorney General Robert J. Del Tufo said yesterday in announcing the DGE action.

DGE Director John Sweeney said Gotti has been identified as the head of the Gambino crime family of New York and was a career offender. He added that the Casino Control Act has a provision to exclude associates of career offenders and others "harmful to the interests of the State of New Jersey."

In its petition, filed yesterday with the Casino Control Commission, the DGE said Libutti played at four Atlantic City casinos between September 1984 and October 1990, gambling \$20 million and losing \$12 million, and was given in excess of \$1.5 million in complimentary services.

Last July, the DGE said, two people associated with the Gambino crime family spoke with an undercover detective and said they were friendly with Libutti and singer Jimmy Roselli. The two also said Libutti bragged of being "in (Donald) Trump's pockets," or having negotiated a lucrative contract for Roselli at the Trump Plaza casino, the DGE petition states.

On Aug. 10, according to the petition, Libutti met with Edward M. Tracy, then president and chief executive officer of the Trump Atlantic City Properties, purportedly to negotiate an exclusive contract for Roselli to perform at the Trump properties—Casle Plaza and Taj Mahal.

Tracy, however, rejected Libutti's offer because Libutti wanted \$250,000 for himself, above and beyond Roselli's contract.

Angered, Libutti told Tracy he could cause "problems" for the Trump Organization and at least four times injected Gotti's name into the negotiations, according to the DGE.

Libutti met again with Tracy in September and indicated that he and others had "sat in front of John Gotti," who offered to assist Roselli in a

dispute with Frank Sinatra, the DGE said.

According to the DGE, Libutti said Gotti wanted him to find out if he could play at the Trump casinos and claimed Trump could make a lot of money from Gotti and other organized crime figures from around the country.

In its petition, the DGE also recited the complaints filed earlier against Libutti for his abusive treatment of minority and female casino employees.

In February 1989, the DGE filed a

### Officials say high roller threatened to put the squeeze on Trump exec

two-count complaint against Trump Plaza, alleging that the casino discriminated against female and minority employees in deference to Libutti's perceived preferences.

Libutti repeatedly abused minority and women dealers and bar people, and

demanding they be removed from his craps game. He also abused other patrons, to the extent that casino officials reserved a table exclusively for him whenever he played.

The Trump Plaza case is still pending before the Casino Control Com-

mission.

Last November, the commission ruled in a similar case filed earlier against Caesars Atlantic City, fining the casino \$250,000 and ordering it to develop a training course for all employees that focused on compliance with statutory affirmative action and equal opportunity requirements, and with appropriate methods of dealing with high rollers.

Caesars replaced minority and women dealers with white males when Libutti played.

In testimony before the Casino Control Commission, officials of Trump Plaza said they stopped replacing minorities and women with white males at Libutti's table after the DGE filed its complaint against Caesars in 1988. Any replacement after that was "like for like, but the best dealer available," the officials said.

The DGE is asking that the commission permanently bar Libutti from all resort casinos because of his association with Gotti.

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☐ Birth  
 ☐ Credit  
 ☐ Criminal  
 ☐ Death  
 ☐ INS  
 ☐ Marriage \*  
 ☐ Motor Vehicle  
 ☒ Other *OCIS*  
 ☐ Driver's License

To	Buded
<i>OCIS</i>	
Return to	File number
	<i>NK 29B-7961</i>

Name and aliases of subject, applicant, or employee, and spouse

*ROBERT LIBUTTI*  
*AKA ROBERT PRESTI*

Addresses

Residence \_\_\_\_\_  
 Business \_\_\_\_\_  
 Former \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\* Date and place of marriage (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Race <i>W</i>	Sex <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	Age	Height	Weight	Hair	Eyes
Birth date <i>2/20/32 or 7/4/28</i>		Birthplace				
Arrest Number		Fingerprint classification		Criminal specialty		

Specific information desired

Social Security Number

*145-244417*

Results of check

*NK 29B-7961-35*

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FBI - NEW YORK	

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QUICK-REF: PERSON-PERSON  
QUICK-REF: PHONE3  
QUICK-REF: PERSON-FAMILY  
QUICK-REF: PERSON-ORG  
FILE-SER: MM\*183B\*49708\*1  
CREATED: 15 JUN 1990  
LAST-UPDATE: 27 FEB 1991  
ENTERED-BY: MM  
ALIAS: PRESTI\*ROBERT  
ALIAS-S: MM\*183B\*49708\*101  
ALIAS: LIBUTTI\*RALPH\*ROBERT  
ALIAS-S: MM\*183B\*49708\*205  
HOME-ADDR: 01  
STATE: NJ  
PHONE: 201\*825\*9028  
ADDR-DATE: 10 JAN 1990  
HOME-ADDR-S: MM\*183B\*49708\*13  
PHY-DESC: 01  
SEX: M  
PHY-DESC-S: MM\*183B\*49708\*1

COMPLETED 368866.000

CILNE=10:37 , STATUS 1,1

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FILE-SER: NY\*92A\*9282BQ\*1792 BQ  
CREATED: 09 APR 1991  
LAST-UPDATE: 09 APR 1991  
ENTERED-BY: NY  
HOME-ADDR: 01  
STREET: 697\*THIRD ST\*-  
CITY: SECAUCUS  
STATE: NY  
ADDR-DATE: 20 FEB 1991  
HOME-ADDR-S: NY\*92A\*9282BQ\*1792 BQ  
TYPE-PERSON: LCN ASSOCIATE  
TYPE-PERSON-S: NY\*92A\*9282BQ\*1792 BQ  
TYPE-PERSON: BETTOR/GAMBLER  
TYPE-PERSON-S: NY\*92A\*9282BQ\*1792 BQ  
SPECIAL-CHAR: NJ DGE SEEKING TO EXCLUDE LIBUTTI FROM CASINOS  
SPECIAL-CHAR-S: NY\*92A\*9282BQ\*1792 BQ

COMPLETED 368926.000

CTIME=10:39

STATUS 1,1

PERSONAL ASSOCIATION INFO

P-P: LIBUTTI\*ROBERT\*-\*2\*LIBUTTI\*ROBERT\*-\*1

CREATED: 09 APR 1991

LAST-UPDATE: 09 APR 1991

RELATIONSHIP: POSSIBLY IDENTICAL TO

RELATIONSHIP-S: NY\*92A\*9282B0\*1797 BQ

COMPLETED 368938.000

CTIME=10:39

STATUS 24,1,,12

PERSON - FAMILY ASSOCIATION INFO

P-F: LIBUTTI\*ROBERT\*-#1\*COLOMPO

CREATED: 14 FEB 1991

LAST-UPDATE: 14 FEB 1991

PERSON-RELATIONSHIP: ASSOCIATE

PERSON-RELATIONSHIP-S: NY\*92A\*7281-A\*2272\*A NY

FAMILY-RELATIONSHIP: ASSOCIATE

FAMILY-RELATIONSHIP-S: NY\*92A\*7281-A\*2272\*A NY

COMPLETED 368912.000

CTIME=10:38

STATUS 2,1,,1

PERSON - ORGANIZATION ASSOCIATION INFO

P-O: LIBUTTI\*ROBERT\*-#1\*BUCK CHANCE STABLE #1  
CREATED: 19 MAR 1991  
LAST-UPDATE: 19 MAR 1991  
PERSON-RELATIONSHIP: DOING BUSINESS AS  
PERSON-RELATIONSHIP-S: MM\*183B\*49708\*267  
ORG-RELATIONSHIP: BUSINESS  
ORG-RELATIONSHIP-S: MM\*183B\*49708\*267

COMPLETED 368902.000

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STATUS 4,1,,3

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STRT= 368912.000 DATE=05/15/91 TIME=10:38 USER=MKICZB#MKICZB

DB=OCIS

PERSONAL ASSOCIATION INFO

P-P: LIBUTTI\*ROBERT\*-#1\*LIBUTTI\*EDITH\*-#1

CREATED: 16 JUL 1990

LAST-UPDATE: 27 FEB 1991

RELATIONSHIP: FATHER

RELATIONSHIP-S: MM\*183B\*49708\*101

MM\*183B\*49708\*205

P-P: LIBUTTI\*ROBERT\*-#1\*[REDACTED]-#1

CREATED: 16 JUL 1990

LAST-UPDATE: 16 JUL 1990

RELATIONSHIP: ASSOCIATE

RELATIONSHIP-S: [REDACTED]

COMMENTS: [REDACTED] PURCHASED RACE HORSE [REDACTED] FROM

COMMENTS-S: [REDACTED]

COMMENTS: LIBUTTI.

COMMENTS-S: [REDACTED]

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b7C

P-P: LIBUTTI\*ROBERT\*-#1\*[REDACTED]-#1

CREATED: 14 FEB 1991

LAST-UPDATE: 14 FEB 1991

RELATIONSHIP: ASSOCIATE

RELATIONSHIP-S: [REDACTED] NY

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b7C

P-P: LIBUTTI\*ROBERT\*-#1\*[REDACTED]-#1

CREATED: 27 FEB 1991

LAST-UPDATE: 27 FEB 1991

RELATIONSHIP: SOCIAL

RELATIONSHIP-S: [REDACTED]

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b7C

P-P: LIBUTTI\*ROBERT\*-#1\*[REDACTED]-#1

CREATED: 28 FEB 1991

LAST-UPDATE: 28 FEB 1991

RELATIONSHIP: ASSOCIATE

RELATIONSHIP-S: [REDACTED]

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b7C

P-P: LIBUTTI\*ROBERT\*-#1\*LIBUTTI\*ROBERT\*-#2

CREATED: 09 APR 1991

LAST-UPDATE: 09 APR 1991

RELATIONSHIP: POSSIBLY IDENTICAL TO

RELATIONSHIP-S: NY\*92A\*9282BQ\*1792 BQ

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STATUS 17,6,,12

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STMT= 368892.000 DATE=05/15/91 TIME=10:38 USER=NKICZB:NKICZB

DB=

TELEPHONE INFO

PHONES: 201\*825\*7020  
 CREATED: 14 JUL 1990  
 LAST-UPDATE: 16 JUL 1990  
 QUICK-REF: PERSONAL-DATA  
 ADDR: 01  
 STATE: NJ  
 ADDR-S: NM\*183B\*47700\*13  
 PERSON-SUBSCRIBER: LIBUTTI\*ROBERT\*-31  
 PERSON-SUBSCRIBER-S: NM\*183B\*47700\*13

PHONES: 201\*394\*4772  
 CREATED: 14 JUL 1990  
 LAST-UPDATE: 16 JUL 1990  
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 TYPE-PHONE-S: NM\*183B\*47700\*13  
 PERSON-USER: LIBUTTI\*ROBERT\*-31  
 PERSON-USER-S: NM\*183B\*47700\*13

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PERSON - ORGANIZATION ASSOCIATION INFO

P-O: LIBUTTI\*ROBERT\*-31\*BUCK CHANCE STABLE#1  
 CREATED: 19 MAR 1991  
 LAST-UPDATE: 19 MAR 1991  
 PERSON-RELATIONSHIP: DOING BUSINESS AS  
 PERSON-RELATIONSHIP-S: NM\*183B\*47700\*207  
 ORG-RELATIONSHIP: BUSINESS  
 ORG-RELATIONSHIP-S: NM\*183B\*47700\*207

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E LISTP-P-F LIBUTTI\*ROBERT\*-31#  
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# Memorandum



To : SAC, NEWARK (29B-9961)

Date 9/3/91

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From : SA [REDACTED]

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b7C

Subject: CHANGED  
TED KRUCKEL, JR.  
PRESIDENT,  
URBAN NATIONAL BANK OF  
FRANKLIN LAKES, NEW JERSEY;  
ROBERT LIBUTTI,  
aka, Robert Presti,  
dba, Buck Change Stables;



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LOAN RECIPIENTS;  
BF&E  
OO: NEWARK

Title is marked changed to reflect additional subjects and their businesses. *P.122*

For indexing purposes the following descriptive data is being furnished:

Name: ROBERT LIBUTTI  
Race: White  
Sex: Male  
DOB: 2/20/32 or 7/4/28  
SOC: 145-24-4417

*1*-Newark  
GJI/eo  
(2)

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FBI - NEWARK	

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Additional aliases used by LIBUTTI are: RALPH LIBUTTI,  
ROBERT NICHOLAS SPADEA, ROBERT NICHOLAS, NICHOLAS SPADEA, HARRY  
LAROSA, VINCENT PRESTI.

Name:  
Race:  
Sex:  
DOB:

Name:  
Race:  
Sex:  
DOB:  
SOC:

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In addition on 8/14/91, in the presence of AUSA

and SA

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SEP 20 1991			
FBI - NEWARK			

*[Signature]*



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"SPORTS ILLUSTRATED"

Date: TED KNUCKEL, JR.,  
Edition: PRESIDENT,  
URBAN NATIONAL BANK

Title: ET AL;  
BFFE OO: NK

Character: 29B-9961

or  
Classification: ARTICLE REGARDING  
Submitting Office:

TED KNUCKEL, ROBERT  
LIBERTY

OWNERSHIP  
OF HORSE "GROOVY"

FRANK MICELOTTA

# IN THE GROOVE AT LONG LAST

*The champion sprinter Groovy is the fastest horse in the land, but he had to outrun a lot of human foolishness to prove it*

BY WILLIAM NACK

**O**N THE KENTUCKY GRAVE OF THE immortal Domino, the Black Whirlwind of American racing in the 1890s, the simple headstone reads: "Here lies the fleetest runner the American turf has ever known. and one of the gamest and most generous of horses."

The hallmark of the thoroughbred, the most compelling of his qualities and the very symbol of the breed itself always has been and always will be speed. The sport of racing grew from that eternal question: Who has the fastest horse? Even though the best horses are those who have shown they could run the fastest over the classic distances, a special

mystique has always attached itself to the fastest sprinter in the land. There have been some bullets in the last 40 years: Tom Fool, White Skies, Decathlon, Ta Wee, Dr. Fager, Forego.

In the grand tradition of Domino, they were the fleetest horses of their day, and this year they are joined by another, a sleek-bodied chestnut colt by the name of Groovy. Last Saturday in the seven-furlong Vosburgh Stakes at Belmont Park, he raced, as usual, from the gate to the front, opened up a five-length lead 220 yards from home and then held on gamely over a dull, tiring track to win by three quarters of a length. It was Groovy's sixth victory in as many sprint stakes this year and made him a virtual lock to win the Eclipse Award as the na-

tion's champion sprinter. For the past four months Groovy has been the fastest racehorse in the world and some say the fastest sprinter since 1968, when the legendary Dr. Fager blew around the track at Aqueduct like a malevolent wind. "He's the best pure sprinter I've seen in New York in about 20 years," says veteran trainer Philip Johnson.

"He's the Carl Lewis of racehorses," says trainer Leroy Jolley. "The only world-class sprinter in America."

"Groovy's the fastest thing I ever put my ass on," says his regular jockey, Angel Cordero Jr., who has plunked his derriere down on more than 32,000 mounts, including the phenomenally fast Seattle Slew.

Moreover, Groovy's recent achievements have made him a contender for Horse of the Year. Only half an hour after Groovy's Vosburgh triumph and on the same Belmont track, 3-year-old Java Gold, who went off as the heavy favorite to win the mile-and-a-half Jockey Club Gold Cup, lost, shockingly, by 4 1/4 lengths to Creme Fraiche. A win by Java Gold might have locked up the Horse of the Year trophy; instead, the defeat created a guessing game. Java Gold suffered a bruised foot in Satur-

Groovy's wire-to-wire triumph in the Vosburgh Stakes made him 6 for 6 in 1987.

day's race, and, says his trainer, Mack Miller, he won't run again this year. Now, if Alysheba, the other chief contender for the Horse of the Year title, wins the Breeders' Cup Classic on Nov. 21, he'll likely get the nod. But if Alysheba loses, trackside speculation has it that Groovy, with a victory in the Breeders' Cup Sprint, could well become the first pure sprinter ever named Horse of the Year.

But what's more remarkable is that Groovy got to 1987 at all. That he survived, that he's still alive and running sound after all he has been through, is as much a testament to his mental resilience as to his uncommon physical toughness. His epitaph too could eulogize "one of the gamest and most generous of horses."

Most horses begin their careers running in easy maiden races against other nonwinners and then graduate to more competitive allowance races. Then, if they show the ability, they graduate to stakes races. Groovy skipped grade school and high school and went directly to college: his 25 lifetime starts (of which he has won 12, earning \$1,121,956) have all been in stakes races.

Along the way he has gone through more hands than a stray kitten in a schoolyard—eight different trainers in one 16-month stretch—and he was subjected to a campaign that would have ruined most horses. It included a trip to the 1¼-mile Kentucky Derby, in which he finished 16th, dead last, beaten by 49¾ lengths, and, two weeks later, to the 1⅜-mile Preakness Stakes, in which he finished sixth of seven, beaten by 13¾ lengths. A month later, and none too soon, he came under the care of trainer Jose Martin, who rescued him from the abounding confusion, started running him only in sprints and guided him

flawlessly through this championship season. "He went through so much to get where he is today," says one of those eight trainers, Howard Crowell. "He's overcome all human dumbness, and he's still going to be an Eclipse champion."

As if Groovy's early trials on the racecourse weren't damaging enough, controversy and suspicion have shadowed him off the track. The investigative arm of the New York Racing Association continues to try to determine whether Robert Ralph Libutti has been a hidden owner of the colt. Libutti, then known as Robert Presti, was at the center of a 1971 scandal over his alleged hidden ownership of racehorses, including the talented 3-year-old Jim French. A self-described thoroughbred consultant, horse broker and breeder, Libutti is unlicensed to own racehorses and, according to racing officials, has been barred from New York tracks since 1968.

Libutti denies having ever owned Groovy. He says he purchased the colt for his daughter, Edith, at a Florida auction of 2-year-olds in February 1985 and

sold him two months later. "I don't own horses," Libutti says. He buys them, he says, as an agent, and sells them. As a paid consultant to the two men who owned Groovy until this August, Libutti also took an active interest in the colt's career. Libutti has a shrewd eye for horses. Jim French was one of the best colts of his generation. And Groovy, as things turned out, has proved to be one of the bargains of the decade.

He was born in Texas, a son of the 1976 Canadian Horse of the Year, Norcliffe, himself a beautifully bred son of Buckpasser out of a Northern Dancer mare. On the day before that February 1985 sale, Groovy rushed through a quarter-mile work in an eye-catching 23⅝ seconds and attracted Libutti's attention. "I figured I'd have to go to \$250,000 to get him," Libutti says. But when the bidding stopped at \$81,000, daughter Edith and her Lion Crest Stables owned the horse. Then Lion Crest

Creme Fraiche's Gold Cup win over Java Gold gives Groovy a shot at Horse of the Year.



sold Groovy to one of Libutti's clients, New Jersey banker Ted Kruckel, for \$250,000, according to Libutti. And so the colt's strange odyssey began.

Florida trainer Eddie Yowell was the first to have Groovy at a racetrack. "Right from the go, he looked like a real nice horse," Yowell says. "Fast horse. And a pretty horse." But a sick horse, too. "He always had a bad throat, pharyngitis," Yowell says. So he couldn't do much with Groovy.

The revolving door began to turn. Shipped to New York, the colt landed in the barn of Mervin (Magoo) Marks, who trained him briefly. The horse was moved to the barn of trainer Heliodoro Gustines, who had him for all of eight days before Kruckel called and told Gustines to return the horse to Marks.

"It was like the comedy hour," Gustines says. Marks had the colt until, after a disagreement with the horse's connections, Groovy was shipped to Saratoga. So Yowell ended up with him again. When Yowell returned to Florida eight weeks later, Kruckel hired Jack Adams.

Despite the parade of trainers and his sickness, the horse ran well as a 2-year-old, winning his first start, a six-furlong dash at The Meadowlands. It was his lone victory in five starts in 1985, but in each of his four defeats, he took the lead early and then got dusted in the stretch. Groovy was giving off unmistakable signs that he was a sprinter, not a classic horse, and Adams read the signs.

Adams claims Kruckel and Libutti were already talking Kentucky Derby,

while he himself urged restraint: "I'd say to them, 'This horse don't want to go too far. He's strictly a sprinter.'" Adams says they would counter that Groovy had the pedigree to go a route and that Adams was training him wrong. "I was telling 'em one thing, and they wanted to hear another," says Adams. "This is one awful nice horse. He just couldn't go on. After seven eighths of a mile, he was flat, he was done."

In November 1985, Groovy was shipped to trainer Howard Crowell at his Ocala, Fla., farm for a winter's rest. It was a long winter, but a short rest. Crowell sent Groovy to Gulfstream Park for the Spectacular Bid Stakes on Jan. 8, the opening day of the meeting. Adams was there to train him, but not for long. After continuing disputes with

the owners, he was gone before race day. Kruckel called Kimberly Hardy, who had ridden Groovy in morning workouts for Yowell, and asked her to saddle him for the Spectacular Bid. She agreed. Groovy won the six-furlong sprint by three quarters of a length.

By now, though, the course to Louisville—and the longer demands of the Derby—had been set. In February, Houston real estate developer John Ballis had bought a half interest

in the horse from Kruckel for \$1 million. Because Kruckel and Ballis were both Libutti clients, making it a sort of in-house sale, Libutti claimed no commission. Obviously, in their quixotic designs on the Triple Crown, they were all looking to make a larger killing. If by some miracle the colt were to win the Derby, he would be worth millions, and the three men would profit handsomely.

Groovy was shipped to New York, where he was placed in the hands of yet another trainer, Petro Peters. He ran three times at Aqueduct, performing well enough to give his owners reason to press on. Though he tired and lost the seven-furlong Bay Shore Stakes by 4½ lengths and the one-mile Gotham Stakes by three quarters of a length, Groovy wound up a close third in the 1⅛-mile Wood Memorial. But the Wood was illusory. Rating kindly for jockey



After trying several other trainers, Ballis and Libutti (left) turned Groovy over to Martin (below), who made him into a sprinter worth \$4 million to Art and Jack Preston.



Craig Perret, the colt galloped to what for him was a slow and easy lead—a half in :47½—and had enough left to stay in the hunt until the end. What would he do in the Derby, where he surely would not get an easy lead? Undaunted, the Groovy train rolled on to Kentucky, though without Peters, out after yet another owner-trainer dispute. No matter. Crowell was brought off the farm to take his place.

"We really thought he was qualified to run in the Derby," says Ballis. "He had run well in the Wood. I'm new in the business. That [the Derby] is the ultimate. That's what we're here for." Libutti thought that if Groovy could be taught to change leads when he ran, reducing fatigue by occasionally alternating the foreleg he led with, it could help him stay longer. And with Groovy's bloodlines, Libutti says, "Why not take a shot? What do you got to lose?"

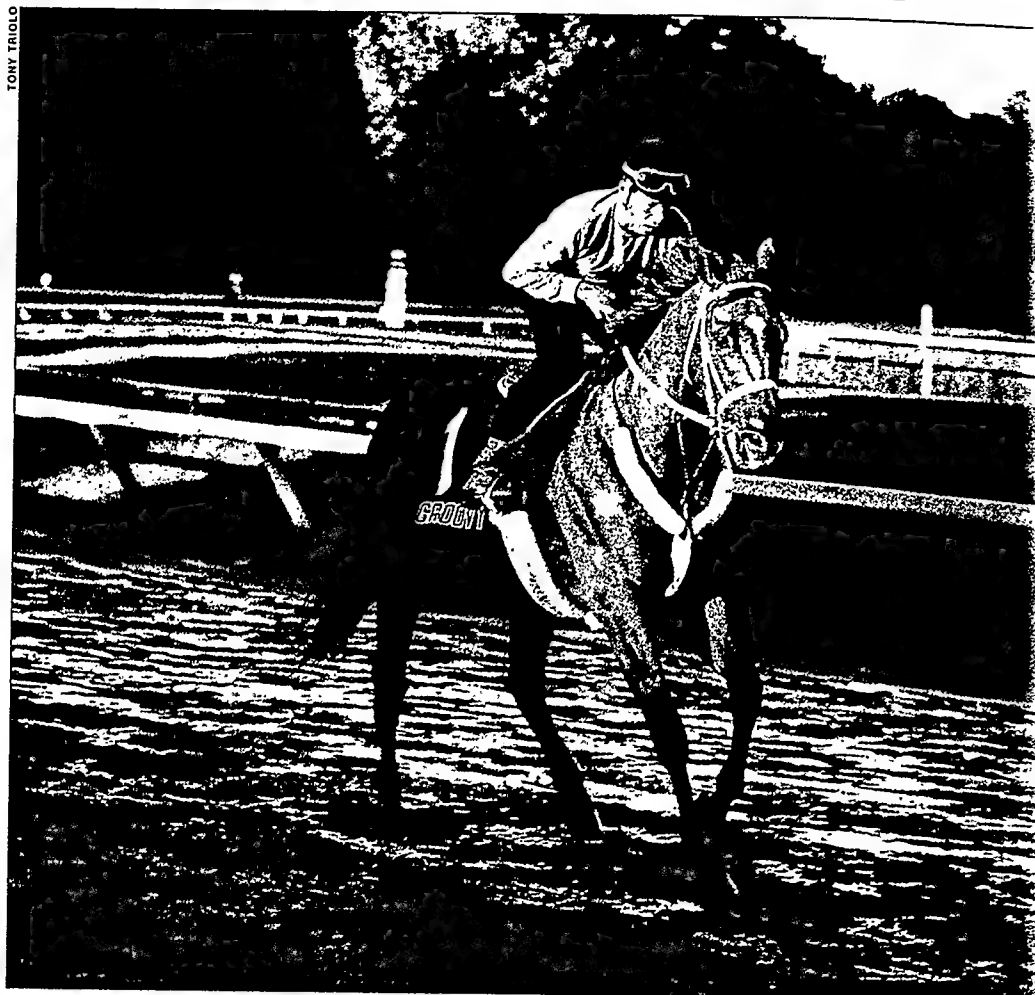
The answer, of course, is the horse. The Derby is notorious as a graveyard for horses ill-equipped to run in it. Groovy scorched the half mile in 45½ seconds, tying the Derby record for the fastest opening half—and at the far turn he stopped as if he had hit a wall. That seemed to be the end for Groovy. And what a pity it was.

The colt had endeared himself to all who had come to know him as a backstretch character. This was the horse that ate raspberry jelly-filled donuts; in fact, he so savored them that he whinnied whenever the coffee wagon pulled up to the barn. "He was like a damn dog," said Crowell. "Anything a man would eat, he'd eat. I fed him a ham sandwich one day. And pickles. I fed him pecans. He'd hear you crack a pecan in the shedrow, and he'd nicker for a pecan. One of the smartest horses I've ever been around."

It was a sad sight to see Groovy shipped to the Preakness that spring. It seemed certain that he would run his eyeballs out and then fold his tent on the turn for home. Why did his owners go to the Preakness? "We didn't know what had happened in the Derby," says Ballis. "You just had to throw the race out." In most corners, though, the thinking was that if the Derby hadn't finished him, the Preakness would surely crush whatever spirit was left.

But the gutsy Groovy survived his poor Preakness showing and, a month

TONY TRILO



Groovy took a morning run at Saratoga—following a breakfast of donuts, no doubt.

later, enjoyed a turn of good fortune when Ballis and Kruckel hired Martin to train him. Groovy won his next three sprints and appeared to be on the way to the American sprint championship until, after two losses, X-rays revealed a bone chip in the right knee.

Successful surgery coupled with nearly seven months' rest brought Groovy to 1987 with the wind at his back. His first two races at six furlongs at Belmont were stunning. In the Roseben Handicap on June 6, he won in a fiery 1:08½; 15 days later, in the True North Handicap, he sprinted to a track record 1:07½. After winning two more sprints in July, he triumphed in the Forego Handicap at Saratoga by 1¼ lengths under high weight of 132 pounds.

The Forego was his first start under new ownership, the three Preston brothers of Houston—Jack, Art and J.R.—proprietors of the Preston Oil Company

and Prestonwood Farm. After the 1986 season Ballis had bought the other half of Groovy from Kruckel for \$950,000, giving him sole ownership of the horse. Last summer, as Groovy dashed to one stakes victory after another, the Prestons offered Ballis \$4 million for him. Ballis took it reluctantly. At Saratoga, after selling the colt, an emotional Ballis said to Jack Preston, "You know, I love this horse as much as you do."

And so, in the end, Groovy has made money for everybody, and he is no longer a nomad. He has three round-the-clock armed guards who sit in front of his stall in eight-hour shifts. "Costs \$10,000 a month," Martin says. "I treat this horse like he was the emperor of Japan. He's unbelievable. I never saw one like this before, and I'll never see another again."

Last week Martin opened a restaurant, which he had renovated, across the street from Belmont Park. He named it Groovys, in honor, of course, of his renovated horse.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Birth ☐ Credit ☒ Criminal ☐ Death ☐ INS ☐ Marriage • ☐ Motor Vehicle ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Driver's License

To NCSC Bided \_\_\_\_\_

Return to \_\_\_\_\_ File number 29B-9961

Name and address of subject, applicant, or employee, and spouse \_\_\_\_\_

RALPH ROBERT LIBUTTI W/M DOB/2-20-32  
TRD KAWICKEL W/M DOB/12-11-36

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Residence \_\_\_\_\_

Business \_\_\_\_\_

Former \_\_\_\_\_

\* Date and place of marriage \_\_\_\_\_  
(if applicable)

Race	Sex <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	Age	Height	Weight	Hair	Eyes
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Birth date	Birthplace
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Arrest Number	Fingerprint classification	Criminal specialty
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Specific information desired	Social Security Number
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Results of check \_\_\_\_\_

29B-9961-39

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NCIC-01124 09/23/91 1627

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SCIC-22633 09/23/91 1628

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, NJ

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NL01SE7A

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QH.NJFBINK00.PUR/C.NAM/LIBUTTI,RALPH R.DOB/022032.SEX/M.RAC/U.IMR/FBI NE  
WARK, NJ

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INQUIRY ON NAM/LIBUTTI,RALPH R SEX/M RAC/U DOB/022032 PUR/C

NAME	FBI NO.	INQUIRY DATE
LIBUTTI,RALPH	646179B	09/23/91

SEX	RACE	BIRTH DATE	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	EYES	HAIR	BIRTH PLACE
M	W	02/20/32	508	145	BRO	BRO	NEW JERSEY

FINGERPRINT CLASS

PO PO 13 PO PO

PI PI PO PM PM

ALIAS NAMES

BUTTI, ROBERT L

LAROSA, HARRY

LIBUTTI, RALPH PETER

LIBUTTI, RALPH ROBERT

LI BUTTI, RALPH ROBERT

LIBUTTI, ROBERT RALPH

FRESTI, ROBERT

OTHER

BIRTH DATES    SOCIAL SECURITY

02/06/32        145-24-4417

04/20/21

IDENTIFICATION DATA UPDATED 11/23/85.

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NAME	FBI NO.	DATE REQUESTED
LIBUTTI, RALPH	646179B	09/23/91

SEX	RACE	BIRTH DATE	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	EYES	HAIR	BIRTH PLACE
M	W	02/20/32	508	145	BRO	BRO	NEW JERSEY

FINGERPRINT CLASS

PO PO 13 PO PO

PI PI PO PM PM

1-ARRESTED OR RECEIVED 03/24/54

AGENCY-POLICE DEPARTMENT UNION CITY (NJ0091000)

AGENCY CASE-5416

CHARGE 1-CONSPIRACY TO ROB

2-ARRESTED OR RECEIVED 06/11/54

AGENCY-SHERIFF'S OFFICE JERSEY CITY (NJ0090000)

AGENCY CASE-40822 NAME USED-LIBUTTI,RALPH PETER

CHARGE 1-ROBB

3-ARRESTED OR RECEIVED 12/17/66

AGENCY-SHERIFF'S OFFICE JERSEY CITY (NJ0090000)

AGENCY CASE-59271 NAME USED-LAROSA,HARRY

CHARGE 1-DISORDERLY PERSON

4-ARRESTED OR RECEIVED 10/15/71

AGENCY-USM NEW YORK (NYUSM0300)

NAME USED-LIBUTTI,RALPH ROBERT

CHARGE 1-UNLAWFUL FLIGHT

COURT-

12/22/71 DISPOSITION-CHARGE DISMISSED-

CHARGE-UNLAWFUL FLIGHT

5-ARRESTED OR RECEIVED 11/18/71

AGENCY-POLICE DEPARTMENT NEW YORK (NY0303000)

AGENCY CASE-2706441P NAME USED-LI BUTTI,RALPH ROBERT

CHARGE 1-FUGITIVE WARRANT STATE OF CALIFORNIA A 543065

6-ARRESTED OR RECEIVED 04/20/76

AGENCY-USM BROOKLYN (NYUSM0200)

AGENCY CASE-322USM7786 NAME USED-BUTTI,ROBERT L

CHARGE 1-FLS SUBSCRIB

COURT-

09/15/76 DISPOSITION-CHARGE DISMISSED-

CHARGE-FLS SUBSCRIB INCOME TAX RETRNS 041570-041571

SENTENCE-

BY COURT

7-ARRESTED OR RECEIVED 11/15/76

AGENCY-USM NEWARK (NJUSM0100)

AGENCY CASE-5385-76NM NAME USED-LIBUTTI,ROBERT RALPH

CHARGE 1-FALSE INCOME TAX RETURN

COURT-

DISPOSITION-

CHARGE-FALSE INCOME TAX RETURN

SENTENCE-

ISS PROB 3YRS FINED \$5000 050278 PROB TERMINATED

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SCIC-22428 09/23/91 1618

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NO NCIC WANT

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SCIC-22402 09/23/91 1618

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NJFBINK00

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NCIC-01035 09/23/91 1618

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NO NCIC WANT DOB/121136 NAM/KRUCKEL,TED

29B-9961 - 40

SEARCHED	INDEXED
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- 1 -

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 9/27/91

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by SA [Redacted] eo Date dictated 9/27/91

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- 1 -

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- 1 -

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Page 68 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 69 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 70 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 71 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 72 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 73 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 74 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 75 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 76 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 77 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 78 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D; b7E;  
Page 79 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 80 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 81 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 82 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 83 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 84 ~ b3; b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 85 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 86 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 87 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 88 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 89 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 90 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 91 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 92 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 106 ~ b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 107 ~ b6; b7C; b7D;  
Page 132 ~ b3; b6; b7C;  
Page 133 ~ b3; b6; b7C;

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